

3-7-2002

## 03/07/2002 - EIU Conference to Address Suicide and Depression in the Schools

University Marketing and Communications

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### Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "03/07/2002 - EIU Conference to Address Suicide and Depression in the Schools" (2002). 2002. 102.

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# NEWS

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02-52

March 7, 2002

For Immediate Release:

## EIU CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS SUICIDE, DEPRESSION IN THE SCHOOLS

CHARLESTON – Since the 1950's, the suicide rate for adolescents has more than tripled, making it now the third leading cause of death among adolescents.

Fortunately, junior and senior high schools can develop a number of policies and procedures that:

- ◆ Help prevent the onset of suicidal thoughts and intentions in members of the general student body;
- ◆ Effectively assess and intervene with students who are already struggling with such thoughts or intentions, and
- ◆ Address the needs of students, teachers and staff following a completed suicide in a way that will inhibit future attempts and completions.

Eastern Illinois University will host "Ending the Silence," its third annual conference on suicide and depression, Friday, April 5. The event will provide practical guidance in each of the above-mentioned areas and assist participants in the development of a comprehensive school suicide program.

In short, the conference, sponsored by EIU's Counseling Center and the Thomas A. Bonine Rainbow of Hope Fund, is designed to educate and raise awareness about the cause of suicide, prevention programs and depression illness, said Tom Bonine of Geneva.

Bonine, along with his wife, Debbie, established the Rainbow of Hope Fund after their son, Thomas, committed suicide in 1998 while attending Eastern.

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Eastern Illinois University emphasizes distinguished teaching in the liberal arts, sciences and selected professions. A traditional, residential state university of recognized quality, Eastern enrolls more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The university, located in Charleston, also serves the region through a variety of non-credit and off-site degree programs, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. Eastern's pursuit of excellence attracts well-qualified students of an increasingly diverse population and a teaching faculty active in research and public service who utilize the latest technology.

The day-long conference will consist of four sessions, plus a question-and-answer period at the end of the day. The keynote address, beginning at 8:30 a.m., will feature Bonine and three other individuals who have experienced the loss of a child to suicide.

At 9 a.m., Keith King, assistant professor of health promotions and education at the University of Cincinnati, will conduct a workshop, "Prevention: Developing a Comprehensive School Suicide Prevention Program." Participants will learn practical steps for incorporating the necessary primary, secondary and tertiary prevention components into a comprehensive school suicide program.

Jim Lund, a school psychologist at Downers Grove North High School and adjunct faculty member at National Louis University in Wheaton, will discuss "Intervention: Suicide Intervention in the Schools," at 10:45 a.m. This workshop will broaden the skills of teachers educators and counselors in the areas of warning signs of depression, suicidal risk and strategies for intervention.

Following lunch, Bill Kirk, professor of psychology and director of the clinical psychology graduate program at Eastern, will present a workshop, "Postvention: So What Now?" This workshop will focus on personal and institutional postsuicide issues and strategies that have been found to be healing, therapeutic and helpful in inhibiting the occurrence of additional suicide attempts or completions.

The conference, scheduled to take place in the Grand Ballroom of the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union, will begin with an 8 a.m. registration and end at 3:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$50 for professionals, \$20 for graduate students and \$10 for undergraduate students. Registration and workshop materials, breakfast refreshments and lunch, and continuing education credits (if appropriate) are all included in the cost of the conference.

Pre-registration is required, with full payment accompanying the registration form. Materials must be received by March 29. For information and/or to obtain a registration form, please contact Eastern's Counseling Center at (217) 581-3413.